

## A Halloween House Tour

By MYRNA WALSH

*(The following article by Myrna Walsh is reprinted from the Oct. 28, 1982 issue of the Clipper.)*



### A Farm in West Duxbury

"The girls were having breakfast and they thought they saw their uncle washing his hands at the sink. He turned, looked at them and disappeared through the wall."

Doris Logan described the eerie comings and goings of the ghost that haunted an old farmhouse in West Duxbury. She lived in the house as a bride and young mother until 16 years ago. She said the ghost appeared to be "a working man wearing a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, dark brown pants, dark hair, about 5'8" tall."

Doris is so definite about his appearance because she and others have seen him often, either in an upstairs bedroom, hovering near the bottom of the stairwell, or in the kitchen. Some of these sightings have been detailed in Hans Holzer's book "Lively Ghosts of Ireland." (That the family can trace their lineage back to the Pilgrims, with only the smallest branch of the family tree coming from the Old Sod, made little difference to Holzer.) In the book, Doris' sister-in-law described the painful moaning, muffled conversations and shouts of the ghost—sounds that emanated from empty rooms. Doris confirmed these and added a few of her own. She heard a baby moaning upstairs and she went to check on her child. As she stood by the sleeping baby, she again heard the cries from somewhere else in the house, except she and her baby were the only ones at home. She also spoke of a human-like shadow filling the staircase.

The unlatching of doors on windless days was quite common. And Doris decided to buy bolt locks for each of the 10 outside doors in the farmhouse and its additions. She installed them all in one day and that night the kitchen door began to rattle violently on its hinges. But no one visible was near it. The dogs, however, were aware of something unusual, because they "went wild," she said. Doris believes the ghost was

She has kept a diary of the ghostly happenings, chronicling the time, who else was in the house, weather conditions, the locations of the pets. She listed the day she walked into a room and saw the rocking chair moving without anyone in it. As she approached, it suddenly stopped. And the time she saw him in the bedroom for an instant before he dissolved into the light from the window. Visitors heard distinct voices coming from empty rooms, heavy footsteps thudding against the stairs and the jarring sound of something thrown or falling down stairs. Dishes would rattle in the kitchen without reason, phonograph records would scatter around the floor.

As diary grew, as she realized that the sounds and disturbances weren't explainable by winds or pranks or the settling of an old house, she became more convinced of the ghost. "I was a total disbeliever at first, but there was definitely something there. There is a very strong, unsettled feeling around that farm."

She probably would have tolerated the bumps and thumps, the voices and rattling dishes, but the ghost became, she said, "very fresh with the children." He once picked up a child and pushed him against the wall. Another time, Doris said, a knife flew off the stove straight for her. At that point she told the ghost to stay away. Doris said that after she asserted herself, the ghost became "friendly."

When Doris later moved to Plymouth, she again confronted a ghost, this one a woman. Two elderly women had died in the house she was renting. As she slept in their former bed, she was aware of "a woman coming through the doorway. It was so vivid and intense. She put her hands on my chest and legs, pressing me into the bed. The next morning I found one of the bed legs had broken during the night." She described her night visitor as a "tough-looking broad, a very big woman, about 5'9," heavy, with a black floor length skirt. Her hair was put into a knot on the top of her head." An elderly neighbor was amazed that Doris could describe so well the long deceased, tyrannical mother of the 2 old women.

Poltergeists and ghosts may set the teeth rattling in regular folk, but Doris has had the ultimate experience: she returned from the dead. "I was once clinically dead. I died in childbirth 20 years ago. Being dead isn't being nothing. I saw myself over the table and in death saw the baby I never would see in life." The child died 8 hours later and Doris never saw him, except in her out-of-body experience. She remembered being poised above the table, having to choose whether to rejoin her body or "go on." Doris had suffered a massive hemorrhage and her 6 doctors at the Naval hospital were astounded at her recovery. She believes this extraordinary experience made her more sensitive to the extra-sensory.

### Two Houses on St. George St.

Flinging objects across rooms seems to be the ghosts' favorite way of attracting attention, sort of bridging the psychic gap. The ghost that lived with the Pye family on St. George St. tore mirrors off the walls without disturbing either the hardware or wire. The family regularly heard furniture moving on the 2nd floor and in the peak, when no one was upstairs. When the 2 mirrors were smashed within a short time of each other

Connie Pye decided to speak to the ghost. After much research, she said she performed an exorcism which she won't describe, except to say that she "let the poor haunted soul feel welcome and mean it." Connie said her family which is "pragmatic and imaginative" but not overly imaginative, were able to identify their unearthly visitor as the mother of a former owner of the house. "I knew she didn't like me," said Connie, "but I really wasn't frightened."

Perhaps the Pye poltergeist is on the move. Further down on St. George St., a woman was hanging her laundry in the back yard of her old, renovated home when she glanced at a bedroom window. There was a face staring at her from inside the house. But there was no one else home.

#### Surplus St.

Another house on Surplus St., built in 1763, may have a ghost. Although the mother in the family, who asked not to be identified, doubts it is haunted, her teenage daughter and a friend have seen lights playing on the ceiling of the side bedroom. The mother believes they are reflections from passing cars, but the girls insist they have felt the presence of an old woman. One of her youngsters has seen a vision of his grandfather, in perfect detail. The man died before the child was born. Even so, her attitude is characteristic of people who stand on the brink of spiritualism. "I haven't seen anything. I'd enjoy it if we had a ghost. Someone who would open and close the door...and let out the dog." Then she paused, "But if it were true, I'd be scared out of my wits."

#### Washington St.

Along the water side of Washington St., heavy footsteps thud along the stairs, back and forth, and when the occupants investigate, no one is there. A man who also asked to remain anonymous, reported that a glass ashtray flew straight off a table 5 feet towards him and a colleague. They replaced the ashtray and tried to jiggle the counter to duplicate the flight. But they couldn't. Sitting with several friends in the section that had been built about 1868, they asked a Ouija board very specific questions about former occupants, questions to which they did not know the answers. And those responses, in clear English, were accurate. A friend advised them not to fool around with the board, implying they might learn something they wouldn't want to know.

This man at Washington St. had a previous experience with a poltergeist. As a teenager he had lived in the village of Babylon, not far from the Amityville house, which he claims is a hoax. However, in his home a poltergeist whom he called "George" regularly

played tricks on the inhabitants. George would suddenly push them away, and he would also turn lights on and off. He released caged parakeets and stirred them into a frenzy that killed them. Once when the teenager was resting on his bed, George sprinkled liquid after-shave on his legs. As the boy spun around, he saw no one, and the bottle of after-shave was teetering on the edge of his dresser across the room, as if left there in a hurry. The cap had been unscrewed.

#### Joy Lane

Houses don't have to be old in order to have a ghost. After the old Danner residence on Joy Lane burned, Mary Eaton built a new home over the old foundation. Shortly after she moved in, a ghost started playing pranks. It turned on her hairdryer in the middle of the night and flung a lampshade about 10 feet across her bedroom. The lamp was undisturbed. Occasionally it gave her bed a violent shaking, as if to wake her. Once it appeared as a light on the ceiling of her bedroom rapidly changing color and shape. And then it suddenly disappeared. It couldn't have been the light from a flashlight, Mary said, because there was no beam, nor were the lights reflections from passing cars because the house is set back into the woods.

Visitors to the home and babysitters have heard conversations coming from vacant rooms, the sounds of spoons in a teacup and pennies being dropped into a bowl. Several people have heard the sound of a car pulling into the driveway, but all the cars there are still and cold. One stormy night, Mary said, her setter whipped back into the house, his tail between his legs, shivering, looking behind him. Previous storms had never bothered him. Even humans have seen a light

blue figure dressed in a simple shirt and trousers, mostly in the stairwell or in her bedroom. "I was first aware of him about 3-1/2 years ago," she said.

Mary has been searching for information about a man named Daniel who might have died in the 1920's in a house on Joy Lane. He may have been a heavy drinker because there is a story that an old still was found behind a false wall in a cottage on the property. She assumes he rented the house since a Daniel has not been listed with the Registry of Deeds as a previous owner.

Perhaps ghosts don't exist at all. And the rattlings, flying knives and shattered mirrors are figments of active imaginations. Or maybe, just maybe, these disturbances are caused by a shamanistic power of the mind. And that's even scarier.